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Factors motivating teachers working at elementary and secondary schools

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to determine the factors motivating teachers working at elementary and secondary schools and the relationships between gender, age, marital status, educational status and income level and their motivation. The study was conducted on 448 elementary and secondary school teachers working in Menteşe district of Muğla in the spring term of 2013-2014 school year. Within the context of the study, a scale was developed based on the scale developed by İncir (1990). At the end of the study, it was found that factor level is high and age and educational status have significant effects on motivational factors, yet, gender, marital status and income are not influential on motivational factors. Moreover, younger teachers and those holding a master degree were found to be more affected motivational factors than the others.

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1. Main text

Works done in the field of motivation are of great interest to all parts of societies. Organizations making up the society aim to develop their psychological sides. Hence, great emphasis is put on the concept of motivation. Therefore, it is indispensable for educational organizations and accordingly for educational system to be affected from motivation. The people working in the basic components of education, elementary schools and secondary

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schools, are affected from the concept of motivation for their organizational goals. In recent years, the amount of research carried out to determine the factors affecting the motivation of teachers working at educational organizations has increased (Mansfield ve Beltman, 2014; Güçlü, Receptoğlu and Kılınç, 2014; Lourmpas and Dakopoulou, 2014; Receptoğlu, 2014; Satman, 2013; Yalçın and Korkmaz, 2013; Ada et al., 2013; Sharabyan, 2011; Güzel, 2011; Alam and Farid, 2011; Lam, Cheng and Ma, 2009; Kulpçu, 2008; Sinclair, 2008; Cemaloğlu, 2002; Günbayı, 2001; Atkinson, 2000).

The root of the term of motivation is “Moti”, it comes from Latin word “Movere” (move). Motivation affects the types of action performed to satisfy a need or for an individual to achieve his/her aim. Conscious or unconscious factors triggering a certain type of action, making it understandable, sustaining it and directing it are called motives in psychology. The formation process of behaviour under the influence of motives is called motivation (Köknel, 1983). A similar definition is given by Turkish Language Dictionary (2000) “Make someone willing and eager to get into action” (Açıksöz, 2008).

Motivation is a state of empowerment having physiologic, cognitive and affective dimensions and energizing an individual for a certain goal, making him/her willing to perform an action, increasing eagerness to work, directing efforts and directly affecting the performance of workers (Bursalıoğlu, 2011; Özdemir and Muradova, 2008; Başaran, 1991). Motivation is the sum of opinions, hopes, beliefs, desires, needs and fears of people activating them and directing their actions (Örücü and Kambur, 2008). Motivation is internal and external motives, desires and wishes directing, empowering and controlling people’s actions by affecting them (Güzel, 2011).

As it is not possible to explain human behaviours on the basis of a single factor, there are many theories formulated related to motivation. The most popular theory of motivation is Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow’s theory of Hierarchy of Needs assumes that there are five basic needs sequenced according to their importance for living as physiological, security, belongingness, respect and self-actualization (Hoy and Miskel, 2012).

In educational organizations, there are two concepts mentioned as the source of motivation. These concepts are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is shaped according to the teacher’s own interest in, curiosity about and satisfaction from the assigned task. Desire, enthusiasm and willingness to do something are important sources of intrinsic motivation. When the satisfaction taken while doing a task is given the highest priority, it means that the teacher is intrinsically motivated to do the task (Güçlü, Receptoğlu and Kılınç, 2014; Joo and Lim, 2009; Littlejohn, 2008; Millette and Gagne, 2008; Lin, 2007). The source of extrinsic motivation is on the other hand is external such as reward and punishment (Littlejohn, 2008). Educational organizations need teachers to achieve their organizational objectives and they use material incentives to motivate their teachers. The success of organizations depends on motivation of their workers (Yiğenoğlu, 2007). Therefore, at schools that are the smallest unit of educational organizations, teacher motivation is an important subject of research. Increasing teacher motivation results in improving efficiency both on the part of teachers and students. Thus, educational organizations can achieve their objectives more easily. Enhancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers is of great importance for students to be motivated in the class and for educational reforms to take place. When the teachers are motivated, educational reforms can be realized more easily, changes are easily adapted to and achievement and satisfaction can be increased (Cenkseven-Önder and Sarı, 2009; Yazıcı, 2009; Günbayı, 2001).

There are many factors leading to display of low or high motivation by teachers working in school organizations in the educational system. Teachers working at schools may exhibit low motivation due to reasons such as physical conditions, job satisfaction, type of control exerted and wage and they may exhibit high motivation due to reasons such as job satisfaction, positive inter-personal relations and pleasure taken from the work (Ada et al., 2013; Yalçın and Korkmaz, 2013; Güzel, 2011; Dereli and Acat, 2010; Kulpçu, 2008; Günbayı, 2001).

Hence, the purpose of the present study was set to be to determine the factors motivating teachers working at elementary and secondary schools and the relationships between gender, age, marital status, educational status and income level and their motivation. In this respect, answers to the following questions were sought.

- 1) What are the attitudes of teachers working at elementary and secondary schools towards motivational factors?
- 2) Are the motivational factors motivating elementary and secondary school teachers significantly affected by gender, age, marital status, educational status and wage?

2. Method

In the present study, survey method is used. Survey method is a type of research used to determine the existing state. In such research, sampling is kept quite large. The easiest way of reaching large sampling is questionnaire. Therefore, a questionnaire is used in the present study. As there are comparisons made based on variable such as gender, age, marital status, educational status and wage, cross sectional approach is adopted and moreover, as the study aims to determine the relationship between the continuous variables of the study, relational survey approach is adopted (Çepni, 2010).

2.1. Universe and sample

The universe of the study consists of 1270 teachers working at 76 elementary and secondary schools in Menteşe district of Muğla in the spring term of 2013-2014 school year. Out of the universe, 448 teachers were randomly selected and make up the sampling. Demographic features of the sampling are: 47.1% (211) are males, 52.9% (237) females; 5.1% (23) are 21-30 years old, 36.6% (164) 31-40 years old, 41.7% (187) 41-50 years old, 16.5% (74) 51 years old or over; 89.5% (401) are married, 10.5% (47) are single; 11.2% (50) are graduates of two-year degree programs, %79.5 (356) are university graduates, 9.3% (42) have graduate education.

2.2. Data collection instrument

In the present study, as a data collection instrument, “The Questionnaire of Factors Motivating Teachers” is used. The questionnaire consists of two parts as personal information and teacher motivation scale. In the first part of the questionnaire, demographics of the teachers (gender, age, marital status, educational status and wage) are elicited.

The second part of the questionnaire includes “Teacher Motivation Scale” to determine the factors motivating teachers. This scale was developed on the basis of “Job Satisfaction Evaluation Scale” developed by İncir (1990), literature review and expert opinions. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .774.

2.3. Data analysis

In the analysis of the data, IBM SPSS 21 program package was used. In order to determine the factors motivating the participating teachers, percentages were descriptively analyzed. Scores of factors motivating teachers were determined to be 35-69 “Low”, 70-104 “Medium”, 105-139 “High”, 140-175 “Very high” (the minimum score to be taken is 35 and the maximum score to be taken is 175). T-test was run to determine whether gender and marital status have significant affects on the teachers’ attitudes towards motivational factors and One Way Anova was employed to test whether age, educational status and wage have significant affects on the teachers’ attitudes towards motivational factors.

3. Findings

3.1. Distribution of the attitudes towards factors motivating teachers

	N	Minimum score	Maximum score	Mean	S
Level of factors motivating teachers	448	55	149	124.08	11.42

The mean of the scores of the teachers’ attitudes towards motivational factors is 124.08, standard deviation is 11.42. These values show that the teachers’ attitudes towards motivational factors are high. This indicates that in general the teachers are affected by motivational factors.

3.2. Teachers' motivation scores in relation to gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Male	211	124.72	11.12	446	1.136	.257
Female	237	123.50	11.67			

As can be seen in Table 2, the sampling of the study consists of 211 male teachers and 237 female teachers. The teachers scores of attitudes towards motivational factors do not significantly vary based on gender [$p > .05$]. This shows that there is no significant correlation between the teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors and gender. Yet, male teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors ($\bar{X} = 124.72$) are more positive than the female teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors ($\bar{X} = 123.50$).

3.3. Age-dependent motivation scores of the teachers

Source of the variance	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	p
Between-groups	1024.245	3	341.415	2.645	.049 (1-3; 1-4)
Within-groups	57300.862	444	129.056		
Total	58325.107	447			

1: 21-30 years old, 2: 31-40 years old, 3: 41-50 years old, 4: 51 years old or over

The data given in Table 3 reveal that there is an age-based significant difference among the attitudes towards motivational factors [$F_{(3,444)} = 2.645$, $p < .05$]. That is, age is a significant variable affecting the factors motivating teachers. There is a significant difference between the attitudes of teachers aged 21-30 and 41-50 and between the attitudes of teachers aged 21-30 and 51 and over. This significant difference favours the teachers aged 21-30. So, younger teachers are more affected by factors motivating teachers.

3.4. Teachers' motivation scores in relation to marital status

Marital status	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Married	401	123.90	11.47	446	-.961	.337
Single	47	125.59	10.94			

As can be seen in Table 4, 401 of the participants are married and 47 are single. The teachers' attitude scores do not significantly vary depending on their marital status [$p > .05$]. This indicates that there is no significant correlation between factors motivating teachers and their marital status. It is also seen that the attitudes of married teachers towards motivational factors ($\bar{X} = 123.90$) are more negative than the attitudes of single teachers ($\bar{X} = 125.59$).

3.5. Teachers' motivation scores in relation to their educational status

Source of variance	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	p
Between-groups	884.855	2	442.428	3.428	.033 (1-3)
Within-groups	57440.252	445	129.079		
Total	58325.107	447			

1: Two-year degree program, 2: undergraduate, 3: graduate

The results of the variance analysis presented in Table 5 show that there is a significant difference among the teachers' attitude scores based on educational status [$F_{(2,445)} = 3.428$, $p < .05$]. That is, educational status has a

significant influence on the teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors. It is seen that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of teachers completing two-year degree program and those of the teachers having graduate education. This difference favours the teachers having graduate education. It can be argued that the teachers having graduate education are affected more by factors motivating teachers.

3.6. Teachers' motivational scores in relation to their wage

Source of variance	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	p
Between-groups	31.339	2	15.699	.120	.887
Within-groups	58293.709	445	130.997		
Total	58325.107	447			

The results of variance analysis presented in Table 6 show that wage does not have a significant effect on the teachers' motivational scores [$F_{(2,445)} = .120$, $p > .05$]. That is, wage is not a variable determining the teachers' attitudes towards the factors motivating teachers.

4. Discussion

The mean score of the teachers' attitudes towards factors motivating teachers was found to be 124.08. In the current study, this mean score is considered to be high. This indicates that while the teachers are working for the goals of the school, they are affected by factors motivating them to a great extent. In this regard, it is clear that enhancing the motivation of teachers is important. In order to increase teachers' motivation, among factors motivating them, the positive ones should be supported and the negative ones should be eliminated from the environment. In this regard, the most important determiners of whether teachers are positively or negatively affected by motivational factors are school directors and educational authorities because the most important person leading the school towards its objectives is the director. Hence, school directors should be sensitive to the needs of teachers, care about their desires, determine the motivational factors that will help to minimize the negative atmosphere in the organization, and support teachers. Directors should especially be careful about intrinsic motivational factors affecting teachers and support these intrinsic motivational factors because teachers having high intrinsic motivation participate in the process more willingly, successfully and actively. The findings of the study concur with the findings of Erdem and Gözel (2014) and Ada et al., (2013).

It was found that the teachers' attitude scores for the motivational factors are not significantly affected by gender [$p > .05$]. Hence, it can be argued that gender does not have a significant influence on teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors. This finding is similar to the findings reported by Erdem and Gözel (2014), Kulpcu (2008), Receptoğlu (2014), Eroğlu (2007), Tanrıverdi (2007) and Güven (2007).

It was found that there is a significant correlation between the teachers' attitude scores for motivational factors and age [$F_{(3,444)} = 2.645$, $p < .05$]. The source of this difference stems from the differences between the scores of younger teachers and older teachers; hence, it can be claimed that younger teachers are more affected by motivational factors. In this respect, it is seen that the older the teacher is, the less he/she is affected by motivational factors, the less sensitive they become towards their job and the more reluctant they become. Efforts should be made to find ways of making older teachers more motivated. This finding is supported by Güven (2007), Tanrıverdi (2007) and Receptoğlu (2014).

No significant difference based-on the teachers' marital status was found among the attitude scores of the teachers [$p > .05$]. Marital status does not have a significant effect on teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors. This finding is supported by Kulpcu (2008).

It was found that educational status of the teachers has a significant effect on the teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors [$F_{(2,445)} = 3.428$, $p < .05$]. The teachers' attitudes are significantly affected by their educational status. There is a significant difference between the attitudes of the teachers completing two-year degree program and having graduate education. This difference favors the teachers having graduate education. This may be because

the teachers having higher education will naturally increase their expectations; hence, they need more motivational factors. This finding is supported by Recepoğlu (2014), Yılmaz (2009), Tiryaki (2008) and Tanrıverdi (2007).

It was found that there is no significant difference among the teachers' attitude scores based on wage [$F_{(2-445)} = .120$, $p > .05$]. Hence, it can be argued that wage does not have a significant effect on teachers' attitudes towards motivational factors. In this regard, it seems that the teachers are not affected by external motivational sources. This finding concurs with Çoşkun (2009).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In light of the findings of the present study, it can be argued that the teachers' attitudes towards factors motivating them are high. Age and educational status have significant affects on the teachers' attitudes towards factors motivating them; however, gender, marital status and wage do not significantly affect the teachers' attitudes. It is seen that younger teachers with higher education are the ones most affected by motivational factors. In this regard, following suggestions can be made to researchers and directors:

- Factors motivating teachers should be selected among intrinsic motivational factors,
- In order to increase the motivation of older teachers, motivating factors should be organized more carefully,
- In order to increase the motivation of teachers, they can be encouraged to do master degree by their directors.

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